

May 22, 2008

### **SENATE FOLLOWS OBEY'S LEAD INCLUDES NEW GI BILL IN SUPPLEMENTAL**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Earlier today the U.S. Senate gave its approval to a measure that Seventh District Congressman Dave Obey (D-WI) sponsored and pushed through the House last week to provide the largest expansion in educational benefits for veterans since the creation of the GI Bill at the end of World War II.

"Our service members and their families have been the only ones asked to sacrifice for this war, and they've been asked to sacrifice again and again and again. They deserve more than just a salute for their service," said Obey. "So I'm glad to see that the Senate agrees that investing in the future of our veterans is not just the right thing to do for them, it's the right thing to do for our economy too."

### **New GI Bill for the 21st Century**

Enacted in 1944, the original GI Bill was intended to thank U.S. troops for their service and help support the economy as it shifted away from a war time footing. The GI Bill paid the full load of a returning veteran's education at a college or technical school and provided a monthly stipend. By 1956, nearly 8 million World War II veterans had taken advantage of GI Bill education and job training, and the record shows that every dollar spent on the program created a seven-fold return for the economy.

However, over the years, GI Bill benefits have not kept pace with the rising cost of college education. Today, veterans' education benefits cover only about 60 percent of the cost of a public-school education.

The New GI Bill pushed by Obey is intended to return educational benefits to the level they were for the WWII generation to give our troops the tools to succeed after military service and strengthen our economy in the face of increasing global competition. It provides service members, including reservists and National Guardsmen who have served on active duty since September 11, 2001, benefits to cover the costs of a four-year education up to the level of the most expensive in-state public school, along with a stipend for housing, books and other expenses. It is estimated that the first two years of the new GI bill would cost what we spend in just two days in Iraq.

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